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HONOUR to art and artists,—the art which has Beauty for its object,—the artist whose province it is to discover and express it! "The perception of truth, and harmony, and beauty, where obscured and disguised, is one of the distinctions of genius. To make these visible to all, is one of its powers. Art should form a part of general education, and will do so, it may be hoped, before long. It may be made to assist *in* education most materially. If, as desired by the ancients, none but beautiful forms were permitted in the assemblies of the young; if noble and holy actions, gracefully set forth, everywhere met the eye; and our rooms were hung with fine thoughts instead of unmeaning patterns;—the effect on the national mind would be much greater than would be believed by those who have not fully considered the subject. Art shows us man as he can by no other means be made known. Art gives us 'nobler loves and nobler cares,'—furnishing objects by the contemplation of which we are taught and exalted,—and so are ultimately led to seek beauty in its highest form, which is GOODNESS."*

The efforts of the artist to express an idea of beauty, existing only in his mind, extend themselves imperceptibly into public benefits, and, as Reynolds expresses it, "are among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinement of taste, which, if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest depravation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony, which began by taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in virtue." The painter (the *true* artist, he means), says a nameless writer in the "poet's corner" of a country newspaper,—

"The painter moves in a world of light
Where every vision is beaming and bright,
Beauty for ever is couch'd by his side,
His genius from morn unto eventide;
And when the fair day waxeth dim,
What is the darkness of night to him?
He plucketh a flower from every thought,
He embodies the drama of every story,
And this voiceless preacher to man hath taught
The religion of love and the hope of glory."

Looking into nature, the great artist will put aside what is special and particular, and seize that which is general and universal,—the power and beauty of MAN, not the peculiarities and littlenesses of men. Philosophers teach us that "every growth of nature has but one moment of perfect beauty:"—the business of the artist is to discover and fix this, and thus to produce that which is more elevated than the actual,—the ideal, the highest aim of art.

Let our artists read, study nature, and *think*: a picture which has no thought in it will induce no thought; "the perceptionless cannot be perceived." In other words, let them remember that "the highest excellence of every production of the hand is dependent upon the powers of the mind by which the hand is directed."

Again, honour to art and true artists!

The spread of a knowledge and love of art concerns us much. We would have it universal: and have laboured hard for years, though humbly, in many and different tracks, those who may have watched us in one, unknowing us in others. We would open to *all* the exquisite pleasure to be found in the contemplation of works of art, of

"Whate'er Lorraine light touch'd with soft'ning hue,
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew;"

and, higher still, of the marvellous productions of Raffaelle the divine, and that wonderful man, Michelangelo. We would have art enter into the life of the people, and see it, as then would necessarily be the case, adorn and elevate our manufactures.

Something has been done in England towards effecting this, and more is being done,—indeed, such agencies are now in operation as never before existed, and, if allowed fair play, will produce great results. When it is remembered, that up to 1824 we had positively no National Gallery of pictures; that before the establishment of ART-UNIONS the possession of works of fine art was wholly denied to the multitudes, (nor were there any but very confined means of leading them to an appreciation of such); further, that until quite recently Government had scarcely admitted the value of the fine arts, still less aided their progress; and, lastly, that our School of Design has not yet, even, begun to work efficiently; it will be seen that our course is but commenced, and that the prospect is satisfactory.

All these institutions, as our readers know, have had our constant attention. The state of the LONDON SCHOOL OF DESIGN for these three years past, has been clearly set forth in our pages:—so far as we know, there is not elsewhere to be found so full a record of its most disastrous proceedings,—and all that we have said respecting it from time to time has been realised. Public duty forbade equivocation; but the condemnation was pronounced in sorrow, not in anger. It has been but a drawing school, and, worse still, a *bad* drawing school. Let us hope that better things will now be done.

At all events, a change is to be made, and it cannot be for the worse, try as they may. The Board of Trade have adopted the report of the "second special committee of the Council of the Government School of Design," already mentioned,* and the director will have no further control over the masters, and indeed scarcely any thing to do with the London school: his services will probably be confined to a general supervision of certain departments of the country schools. A committee of instruction, to consist, as recommended, of five members—three, at least, of whom shall be artists by profession—has been appointed; the artists being Mr. Ambrose Poynter (who resigns his inspectorship), Mr. George Richmond, and Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A. Each class is to have a professor and masters, if we are rightly informed, responsible to the committee; lectures are to be delivered, and the establishment of elementary schools is to be immediately considered.

To produce *designers* must be the object aimed at! a knowledge of drawing and of the various styles of ornamental art which have preceded us, analyzing the principles on which these were produced, is, of course, the first step,—but only a step. We must go much further. To quote a recent writer on the subject: "It is indispensably necessary that the student should be taken to the great Normal School of Nature, and be there taught the modes and principles of natural decoration. The beauties of nature must be carefully studied and developed, and the student must be taught the general application of natural principles and forms, to the various purposes and modes of ornament and decoration. He must then be *methodically exercised* in producing new combinations of the ideas thus acquired; this being really, and in truth, what alone can be called 'teaching design,'—and, most assuredly, the only teaching which can ever result in forming original designers. It is equally indispensable, that a school of design should supply a certain amount of instruction in the condition and processes of manufactures, in order to enable the students, in the course of their school exercises, so to understand and comply with those conditions as to produce designs not only of high artistic merit, but capable of being reproduced by the manufacturer." *

Skill in drawing, as the council themselves stated four years ago, is only preliminary to the real business of the school, "which is to teach *the art of designing ornament*, both in respect to its general principles, and its specific application to manufacture."

At the present moment the school is going on as before, with an arrangement to enforce the regular attendance of the masters,—a very necessary provision, however derogatory the masters may themselves consider it;—and the male school comprises about fifty pupils in the morning classes, and one hundred in the evening.

Before quitting the subject for a time, we would aid the writer of the article before referred to, in denouncing as "erroneous and mischievous an opinion insidiously promulgated, and unfortunately not discountenanced by the corporate authorities in art, that ornamental art is in itself a study so humble as to be unworthy to engross the faculties of any above the class of 'artizan.' In opposition to this depreciating dogma, we may adduce the following assertion of Dr. Cooke Taylor, in his letter to the committee:—'A designer has to invent; and the power of inventing requires that the *mental faculties* should be developed by *general knowledge*. It needs not to dwell an instant on so palpable a truth.' The question between the fine artist and the ornamentist is far less one as to degree of intellectual power, than as to application of that power. The exercise of similar intellectual energies is demanded. Art is, in each case, the exponent of thought, and the rank assignable to the manifestation of such thought must depend upon the powers of mind with which the inventor is gifted. As in 'fine art' there is a humble and an elevated grade of production, so in 'ornamental art' there is a graduated scale, from diagrammatic design to the richest architectonic invention—from the simplest calico pattern to the epic enrichment of a golden salver.' In regard to the beautiful in the works of Nature, the 'artist' and the 'ornamentist' labour on common ground; the difference consisting simply in the end to which their energies are directed. If we would estimate rightly the character and position to be assigned to ornamental art, we must look, not to what it hitherto has been, or now is, in this country; we must rather regard the distinguished rank it has held, and the wonderful results it has achieved, when foo-

* "Report of the Council of the Art-Union of London, for 1847."

* See p. 357, ante.

* "The Government School of Design," an able article reprinted from the *Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 1, 1847, containing a review of the reports and evidence of the Council of the school, recently presented to Parliament.

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